

Annual Report 2001-2002

Mission

The Mission of the Missouri Assistive Technology Advisory Council is to increase access to assistive technology for Missourians with disabilities.

The Missouri Assistive Technology Advisory Council (MoAT) was established by state statute in 1993 and consists of twelve consumers representing a wide variety of disabilities, nine agency representatives, one member of the Missouri House of Representatives and one member of the Missouri Senate. Council members and staff during 2001-2002:

Consumer Representatives

Shari LaRoussa, Chairperson
Teddi Brace, Chairperson Elect
Marnie Gustafson, Past Chair
Karen Collier
Chris Craig
Neil Harms
Scott Higdon
Dick Hosty
Jim Jordan
Rita Lynch
Deana O'Brien
Rhonda Triller

Legislative Representatives

Representative Harry Kennedy
Senator Kenneth Jacob

Agency Representatives

Jim Brinkman - *Rehab. Serv. for the Blind*
Aurita Prince Caldwell - *Health & Sr. Serv.*
Jim Casey - *Insurance*
Melodie Friedebach - *Special Education*
Dolores Hampton - *DD Planning Council*
Ed Kniest - *Medical Services*
Sharon Washabaugh - *Mental Health*
Elaine Reiter - *AARP*
Jim Springs - *Vocational Rehabilitation*

Staff:

Diane Cordry Golden, Ph.D., Director
Roselie Backer-Thompson, TAP for Internet Coordinator
David Baker, Program Coordinator
Sheila Brashear, Office Manager
Marty Exline, Policy Coordinator
Gay Jones, TAP for Telephone Coordinator
Tracy LaFollette, Senior Office Support Specialist
Mike Parker, Operations Manager
Brenda Whitlock, Training Coordinator

Missouri Assistive Technology

Core Services:

POLICY ADVOCACY & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technology and disability policy are in a perpetual state of change. MoAT continues its active role in policy work to address these changes to make assistive technology more available to persons with disabilities.

Accessible Information Technology

Legislation passed this year which expands the existing requirement for state government to purchase and develop information technology that is accessible for people with disabilities. Examples of information

technology are computer software or hardware, telephone systems, web sites, and more. This year's legislation expanded the requirement for accessible information

technology purchasing and development to also include grant programs administered by state agencies. An example might be a grant program to local school districts for the purchase of instructional technology such as computers and software. Addressing accessibility in the procurement of technology is more cost-effective than retrofitting existing information technology systems. MoAT worked in collaboration with

Missouri Council of the Blind and National Federation of the Blind of Missouri on this legislation.

Voting Reform

State legislation passed this year which addressed a wide variety of voting reform issues and includes provisions for a federal grant program related to accessible voting. Subject to federal appropriations, the state has the authority to administer a grant program to purchase accessible voting

machines, make voting places accessible, and train election workers on providing accommodations needed by voters with disabilities. An independent certification provision in the bill requires

electronic voting equipment purchased after August 28, 2002 to meet Federal Election Commission (FEC) voting standards. Currently the FEC standards do not include accessibility requirements, but those standards may be revised to include access standards in the near future. A wide range of disability organizations worked in coalition on this legislation.



Senator Caskey and supporters look on as Governor Holden signs IT Access legislation.

Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment Fund

The Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment (HIKE) is a national organization that provides funding for hearing aids for children whose families cannot afford them. A specialized Missouri license plate will be created with the emblem of the HIKE, which will receive \$25 for every plate issued. MoAT worked to include language in the bill to ensure that the monies raised from the plates will go to benefit Missouri children only.

Assistive Technology Special Education Funding

MoAT worked in conjunction with the Blind Task Force and the Missouri Division of Special Education to allocate about \$45,000 for vision related assistive devices to be added to Missouri's short-term equipment loan program. The equipment loan program is used by Missouri schools who borrow assistive technology devices for trial before purchasing, for use during the time their equipment is in for repair, and for other short-term needs.

In another funding area, the Division of Special Education allocated \$300,000 of federal funds to expand Missouri's capacity to provide assistive technology for school age children. The funding was used to reimburse school districts that made assistive technology purchases for students as specified in the student's IEP. Examples of assistive technology purchased include assistive listening systems, computers and

adaptive software, electronic note takers, communication devices, electronic print enlargers, and braille embossers.

Tax Credit for AT Expenses and Home Access Modifications

Enactment of a tax credit to help individuals with disabilities or their families purchase assistive technology or to make home access changes was a MoAT Council priority this year. Both the House bill, which provided a tax credit for many types of

assistive technology, and the Senate bill, which provided a credit for home access modifications, received committee hearings. While the Senate bill was voted "Do-Pass" in committee, neither bill passed during the legislature's difficult fiscal year. Similar

legislation will likely be introduced again next year.

Health Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids

Obtaining hearing aids for children with hearing loss is critical for a child's language development and educational achievement. Yet many children go without because their insurance does not cover hearing aids. Legislation to require health insurers to cover hearing aids for children was another MoAT Council priority in 2002. While bills requiring coverage for kids did pass for the first time in both the Senate and the House, no bill passed in both chambers. Similar legislation is expected to be introduced in future sessions.



10-year-old David Gustafson accompanied by Marty at the Capitol Building while David spoke with legislators about insurance coverage of hearing aids for kids.

Training and Individual Assistance

Training



Juli Burney,
End Note Presenter

As new assistive technologies appear and related policies are implemented, Missouri's demand for assistive technology training only increases. Individuals with disabilities and their families, local and state agency personnel, educators and therapists were among the 2,525 Missourians who received training this year from MoAT.

Power Up 2002, MoAT's annual assistive technology conference and exposition, was the premier training event, drawing 545 attendees from across Missouri. The conference's two primary strands this year focused on assistive technology for school age children and information technology access, but numerous other topics were covered in the conference's 32 sessions conducted by state and national experts. The conference also featured several dozen technology vendors who displayed the latest in augmentative communication, wheelchairs,

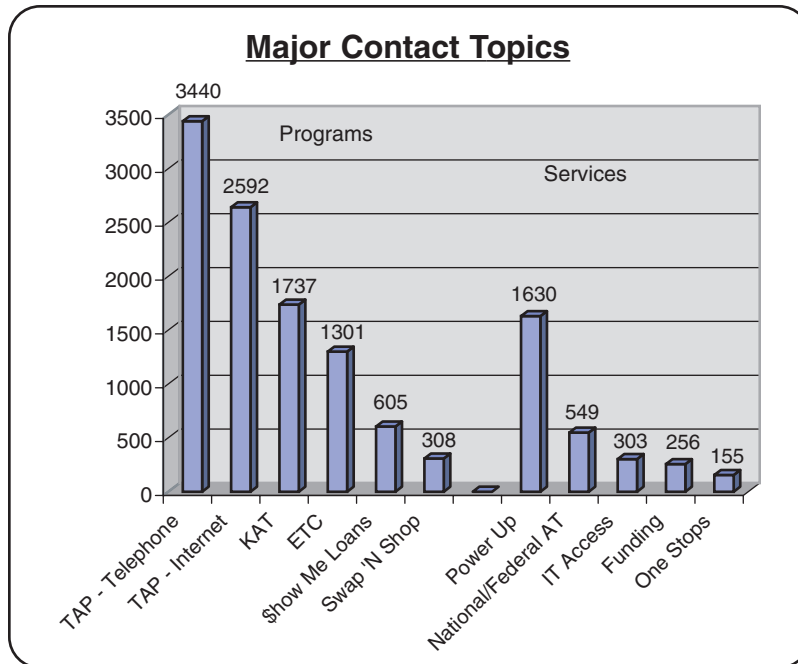
scooters, van adaptations and other technologies that increase the independence of persons with disabilities.

Power Up also presents a forum in which to recognize Missourians whose actions advance the issue of assistive technology. Honors this year were bestowed upon Paula Fox of the Department of Health and Senior Services in Jefferson City, Mary Secora of Services for Independent Living in Columbia, and Teresa Thaman of the Joplin Regional Center.

Aside from *Power Up*, MoAT staff conducted 42 other training events and participated in 9 assistive technology exhibits. Assistive technology funding, the Telecommunications Access Programs for Telephone and Internet and equal access to job seekers with disabilities in Missouri's One-Stop Career Centers were just a few of the subjects covered in these presentations and exhibits.



Power Up 2002 AT reception sponsored by Teltex



Individual Assistance

Persons with disabilities and service providers contact Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) seeking assistance in obtaining assistive technology, securing device funding, accessing MoAT programs, and gaining disability policy knowledge. During this fiscal year, **15,556 inquiries and requests for assistance by telephone and e-mail were handled by MoAT staff.**

The majority of requests for assistance (9,983 or 64%) focused on MoAT's programs, while the remaining requests and inquiries dealt with such issues as the annual conference, information technology access, funding and general inquiries about assistive devices.

A Kansas City area woman contacted MoAT desperately seeking a specialized type of walker sturdy enough to support an individual in excess of 300 pounds. Despite an internet search and speaking to several vendors, the woman was unable to locate the product needed. Having been successfully assisted by MoAT staff in the past, she requested assistance again. MoAT staff was able to provide current, accurate information on vendors who manufactured the walker she needed. During a follow-up call, the woman noted that she had purchased the walker and had recently directed a friend in a similar situation to the same company.



Missouri Assistive Technology Equipment Technology Consortium (ETC)

Scottie wanted to write. His parents wanted him to write. His teachers in the Joplin school district wanted him to write. Try as they might, nothing seemed to work until an occupational therapist suggested borrowing an AlphaSmart 3000 from the ETC Program for this eight-year old with Autism.

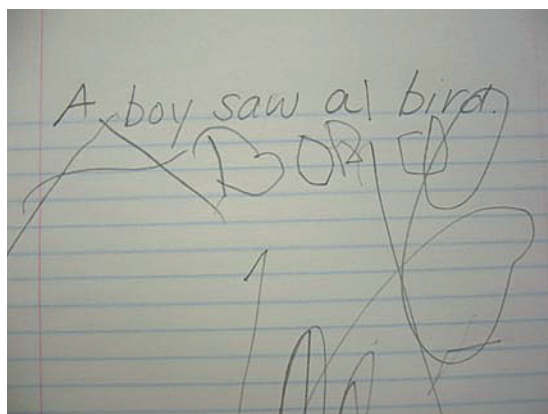


Prior to exploring the AlphaSmart, several “low-tech” solutions such as handweights, adaptive pencils and adaptive markers were tried. These were anything but successful. Because Scottie applied little pressure and had no regard for boundaries, his handwriting was not legible. He experienced great frustration with the process, which resulted in an increase in behaviors such as loud vocalizations, rocking and throwing objects.

Upon receiving the AlphaSmart, a device trial was set up so that data could be collected and used to justify purchase of the device if it proved successful. The data clearly showed that by using the AlphaSmart, Scottie was independently spelling words for the first time ever. This event was such an unexpected surprise that Scottie’s mother was skeptical that a means of writing had been found until she was shown a video of Scottie using the AlphaSmart at school.

The school district reports that Scottie now uses the AlphaSmart, which they purchased, as his primary writing tool and that he is able to complete assignments in a more timely manner in a regular classroom.

Before

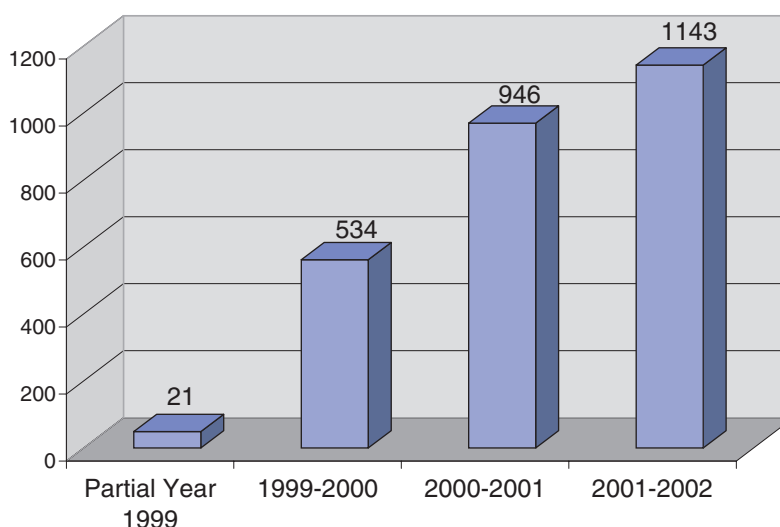


After

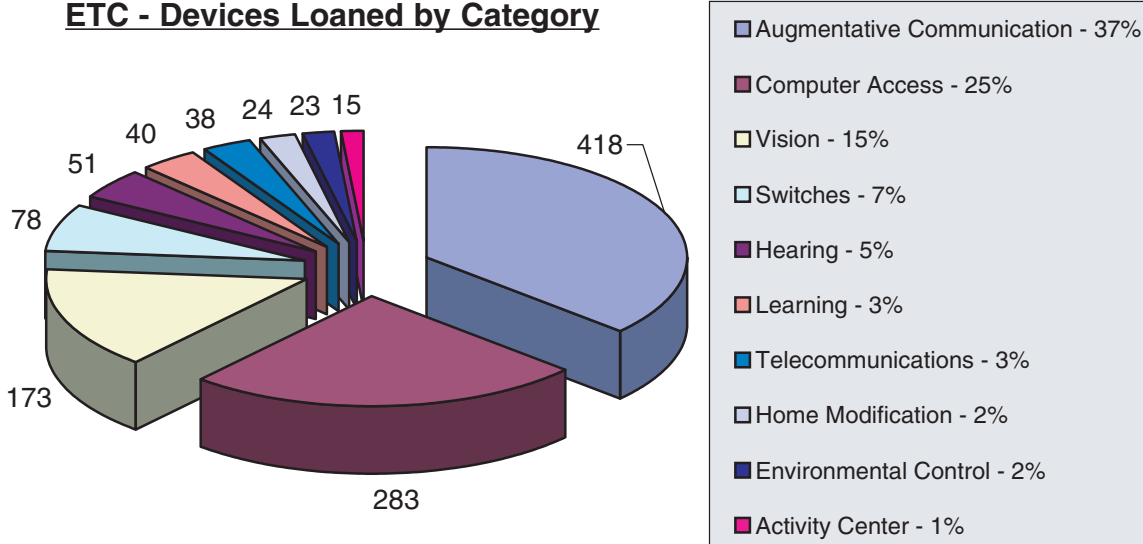


The Equipment Technology Consortium is a statewide short-term assistive device loan program for school districts and agencies. The program offers over 850 pieces of equipment divided among ten different categories of assistive technology. ETC completed its third full year of operation in 2001-02 with a 21% increase in the number of devices loaned (1,143 total borrows) and a 13% increase in the number of school districts and agencies signed up for the program (351 total school districts and agencies). Follow up surveying of borrowers showed strong consumer satisfaction with the program for the third straight year, as 93% of borrowers reported being extremely pleased with the program and its level of service.

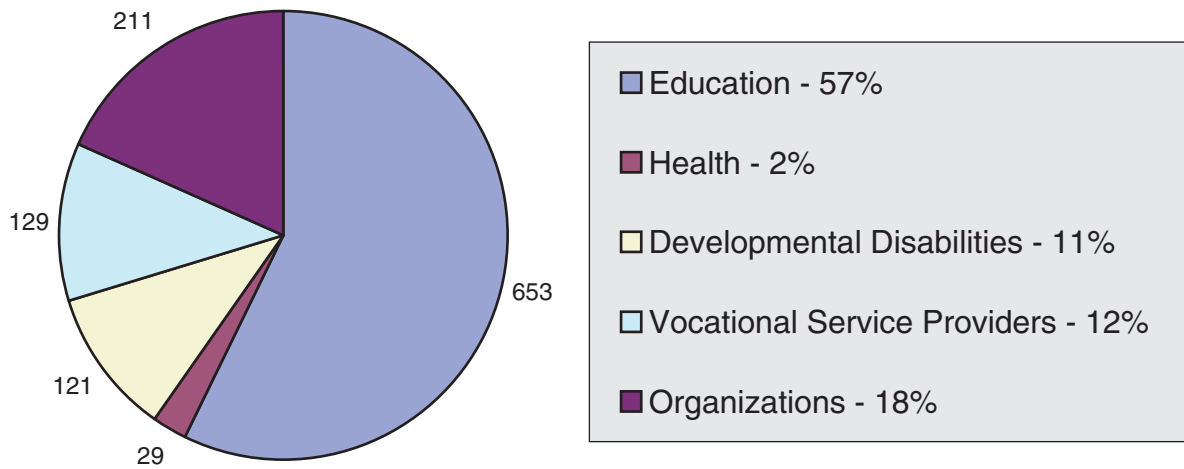
ETC - Devices Loaned



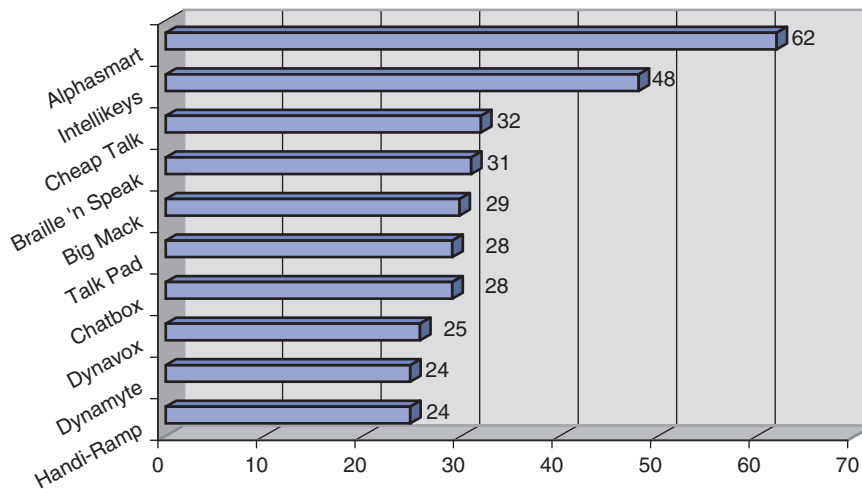
ETC - Devices Loaned by Category



ETC - Loans by Agency



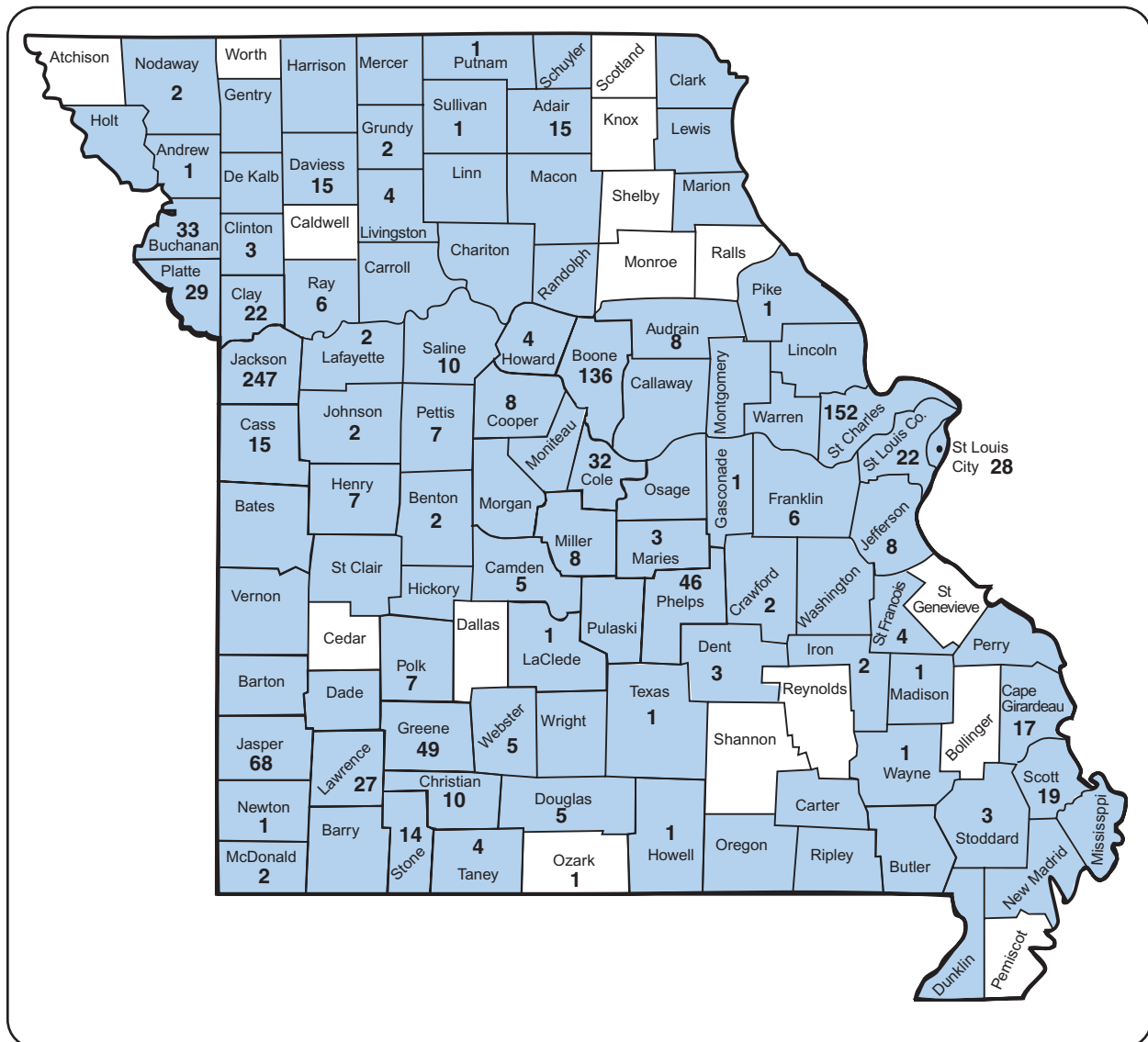
ETC - Top Devices Loaned



There are three main reasons that individuals borrow from ETC. The first of these is to increase their personal knowledge of assistive technologies. Special educators, therapists and consumers often take out loans simply to explore new items, thus increasing the overall assistive technology knowledge base in Missouri. The second reason is to provide continuous access to assistive devices during times that an individual's personal device might be in for repair. The third reason is to help assure appropriate device matches and the prudent use of public funds. To illuminate this third point further, follow up surveying of borrowers indicates that nearly 25% of loans lead to an eventual assistive technology purchase. Those individuals who have made purchases after borrowing through ETC indicate that they often borrowed multiple assistive devices, used them in several different settings (e.g. in school, at home and in the community), and compared them for ease of use and durability before recommending a particular device to obtain. Such actions by borrowers, it is estimated, prevents thousands of dollars in inappropriate purchases each year.

ETC Presence and Distribution By County 7/1/01 – 6/30/02

All counties with color represent ones in which at least one school district or agency has signed up to borrow from ETC. The numbers represent the devices loaned for individuals in that county.



Missouri Assistive Technology Kids Assistive Technology Program (KAT)

A mother in Cape Girardeau was having trouble transporting her 9-year-old son with muscular dystrophy because the wheelchair lift needed for their van was unaffordable at a cost of \$4,100. The KAT program was able to provide funding for the lift. The mother said, "The van lift is a lifesaver. Before, we couldn't use his motorized wheelchair when we went places. We had to take his manual chair. Now we can take his motorized chair which allows him to go everywhere he wants just about".



Abby (pictured at left) is a 2-year old girl from Franklin County with a severe to profound hearing loss. Her hearing loss limited her ability to interact with her two hearing sisters and other family members. The cost of the expensive digital hearing aids Abby needed to improve her hearing was \$5,000. Her family was approved for part of the needed funding through the KAT program, with the remainder coming through First Steps. Her father says that now that she has her hearing aids, Abby jabbbers constantly with her sisters.

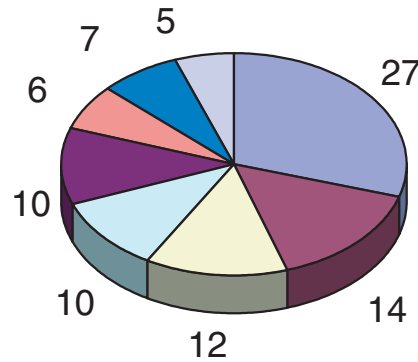
For the past two years, MoAT has been able to help children and adolescents with disabilities to improve or maintain their independence through the Kids Assistive Technology (KAT) program. Funding for the KAT program has been provided by the Department of Health and Senior Services– Bureau of Special Health Care Needs.

This year, the program was able to provide \$147,246 in KAT funding and leveraged \$45,116 in additional funding. The total of \$192,362 enabled 79 children to receive assistive technology devices, home access modifications and vehicle access modifications.

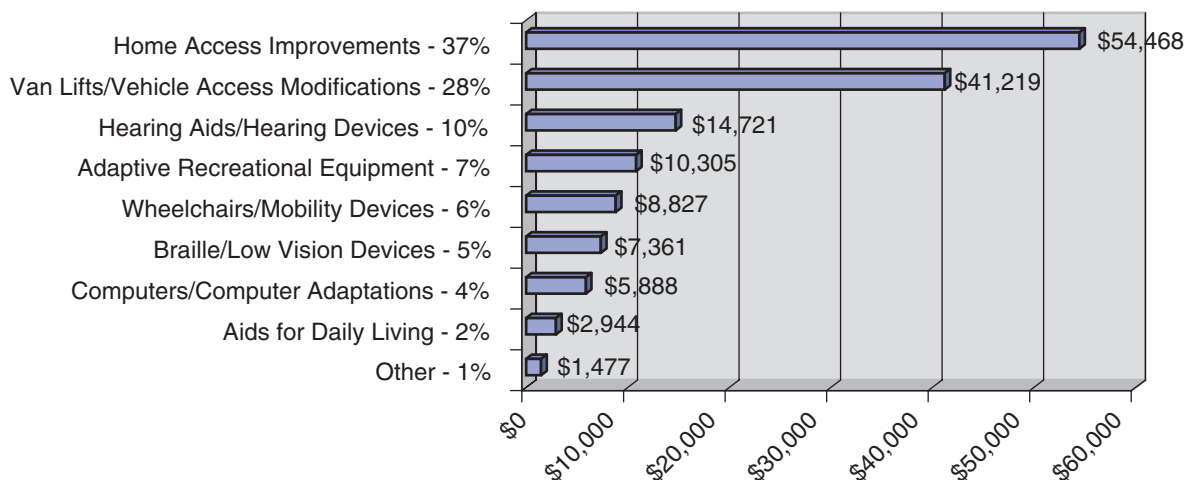
	FY '01	FY '02
Families Served	59	79
KAT Dollars Provided	\$145,416	\$147,246
Additional Dollars Leveraged	\$37,995	\$45,116
Total Assistance to Families	\$183,411	\$192,362

KAT - Types of AT Provided

Home Access Improvements - 26%	Van Lifts/Vehicle Access Mod. - 21%
Computer/Computer Adaptations - 13%	Wheelchairs/Mobility Devices - 11%
Adaptive Recreational Equipment - 11%	Hearing Aids/Hearing Devices - 6%
Aids for Daily Living - 8%	Other - 4%



KAT - Dollars Expended by Type of AT



Making homes accessible and modifying family vehicles to be accessible for children with disabilities were among the most needed, but most unaffordable items requested. KAT provided assistance only when other funding resources were not available.

The 191 applications received this year was an increase of 56% over the number received the previous year, demonstrating a significant unmet need for funding assistance for families of children with disabilities to make assistive technology purchases.

Missouri Assistive Technology Show Me Loans



The family of a Southeast Missouri State University student was seeking to purchase a stairway lift. Shane, pictured here, uses a wheelchair and needed the lift to reach his accessible room located in the basement. The family received part of the funding through charitable contributions, but still needed over \$4,000 to buy the lift. They applied for and received a Show-Me Loan on which they are able to make affordable monthly payments.

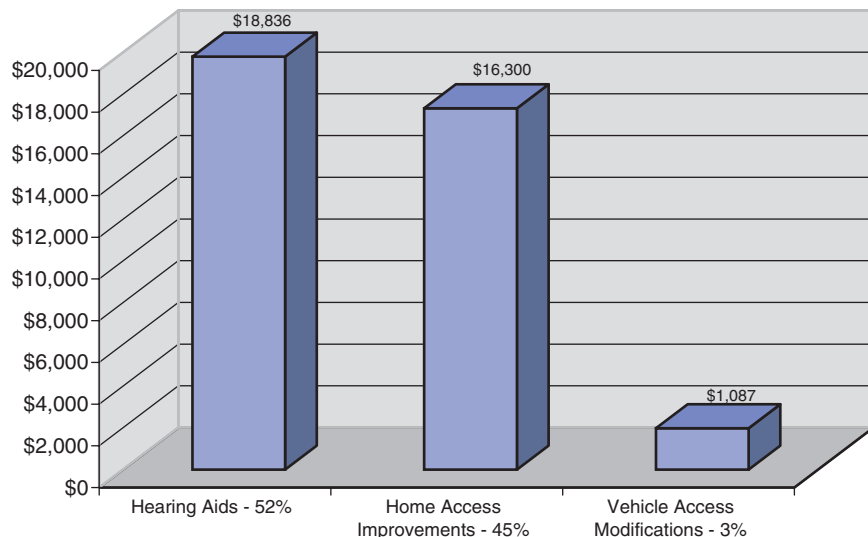


Show Me Loans, Missouri's new low-interest loan program was established as a way of helping individuals purchase assistive technology. The program provides alternative financing for persons with disabilities and family members for home access improvements, vehicle access modifications, and assistive technology equipment at flexible terms and rates. The average interest rate

paid by borrowers is less than 4%.

Ten loans totaling \$36,223 were provided in the program's first six months. One borrower made multiple home access improvements; two installed stairway lifts; six purchased digital hearing aids; and one purchased a specialized van wheelchair lift.

Assistive Technology by Dollars Loaned



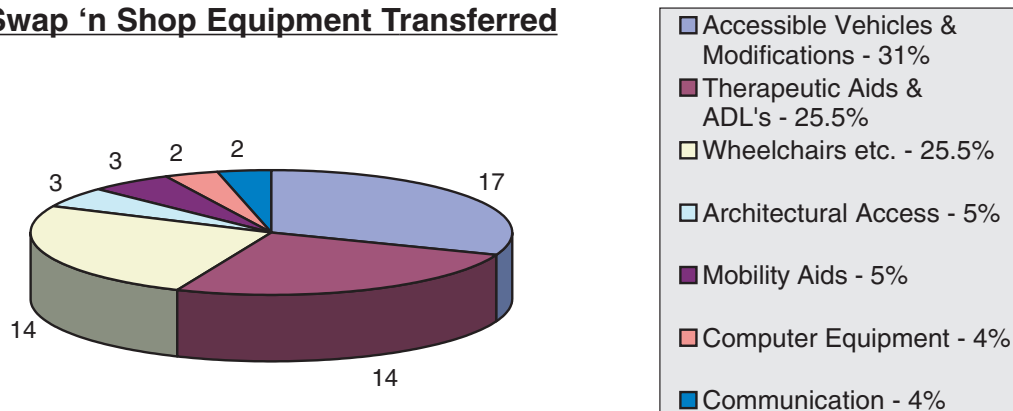
Missouri Assistive Technology Swap 'n Shop

A church in St. Louis desperately needed an accessible van to include a child with special needs in their daycare. Through Missouri's Swap 'n Shop, they were able to locate a van that a consumer no longer needed. The church purchased the van at a reasonable cost and uses the van almost daily to serve the community.

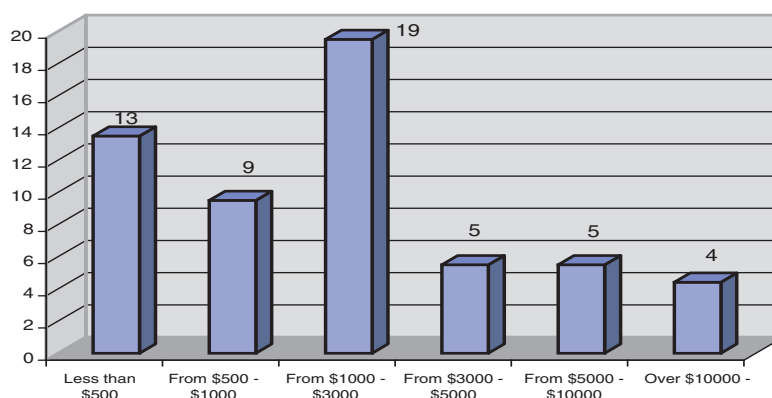


The high cost of many types of assistive technology (AT) keeps Missourians from getting the equipment they need. One way that MoAT addresses this problem is through the **Swap 'n Shop**, an equipment exchange program that allows persons with disabilities to obtain devices from other individuals in the state who no longer use them. This year, Swap 'n Shop received 127 new listings for available equipment such as adapted vehicles, power wheelchairs and scooters, hearing and vision technology, lifts, aids for daily living and many other kinds of devices. In 2001-02, Missourians **saved \$295,875** by getting their 55 assistive technology devices through Swap 'n Shop instead of buying it new.

Swap 'n Shop Equipment Transferred



Swap 'n Shop - Price Range of Transferred Equipment

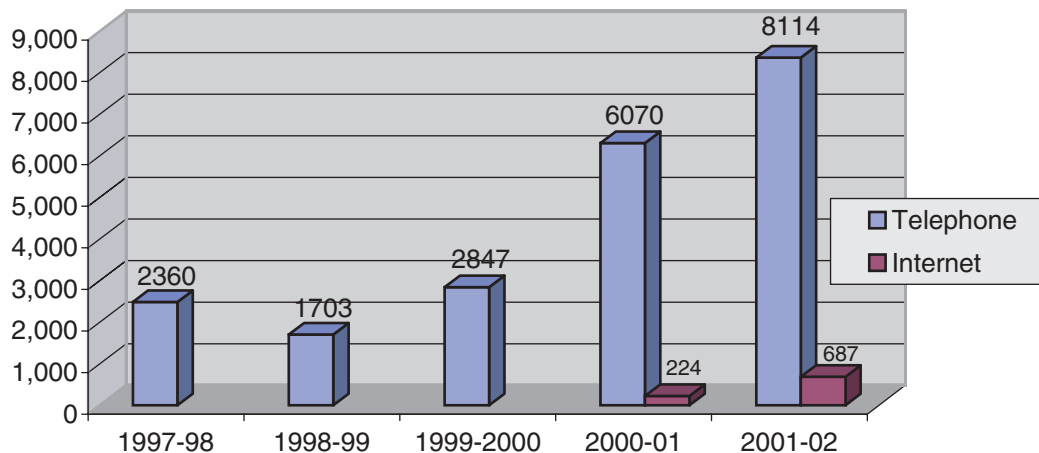


Missouri Assistive Technology Telecommunications Access Program (TAP)

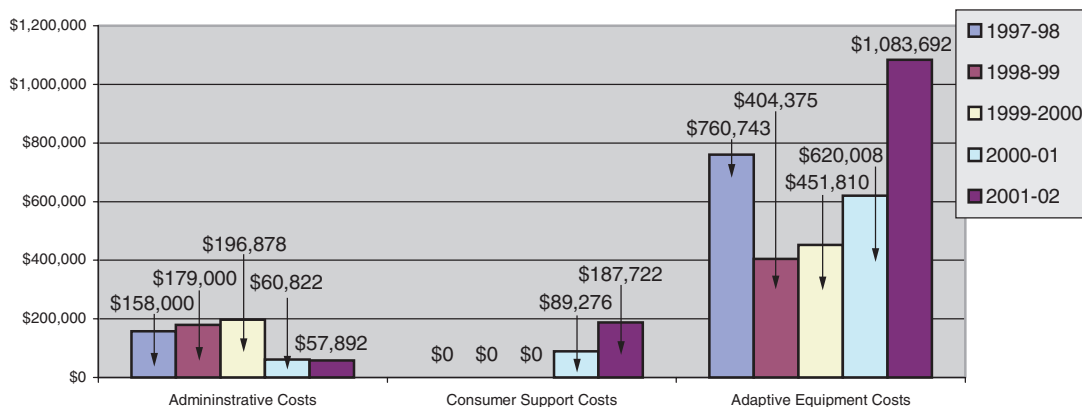
Every day, millions of Missourians use the telephone and internet to make purchases, search for jobs, apply for public services and to communicate with far-away family. However, many Missourians are not able to use basic telecommunications because a disability limits their hearing, vision, mobility or other abilities. Missouri's Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) meets these needs through TAP for Telephone providing devices such as text telephones, amplified phones and hands-free phones, and TAP for Internet providing equipment such as alternative keyboards, screen enlarging and screen reading software.

A total of 8,801 adaptive devices were provided this year, compared to 6,294 last year, reflecting a 40% increase in devices delivered to consumers. For 2001-02 adaptive equipment costs were 81% of the total, consumer support costs were 14%, and administrative costs were 5%.

Devices Provided



TAP Yearly Expenditures



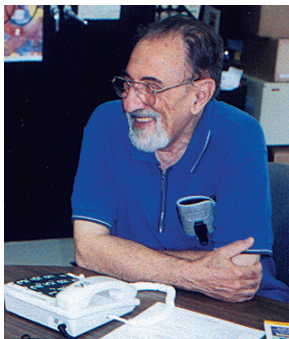
TAP for Internet began operation in late 2000-01. MoAT assumed operation of TAP for Telephone program in 2000-01.



TAP for Telephone

Stella Mae has mobility problems in addition to being hard of hearing. She had a hard time getting to her telephone when it rang, along with not being able to hear callers. She received a cordless, amplified phone through TAP for Telephone that she can carry with her around her home.

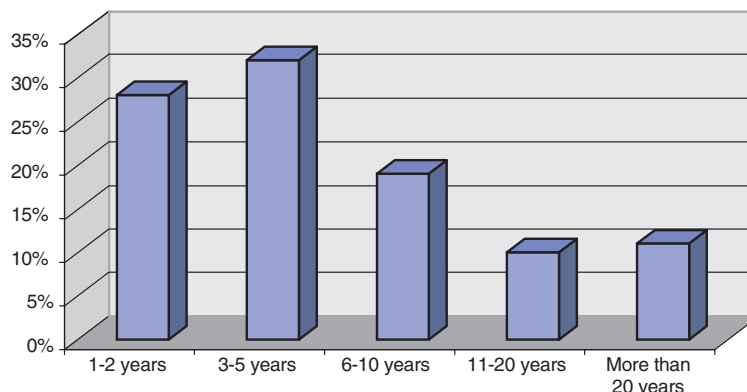
At age 94, Vivian still is able to live in her home. She loves to keep in touch with her family and friends, but hasn't been able to very well for several years because of her severe hearing loss. She is now able to communicate with them daily with her adapted phone that amplifies up to a 50-decibel gain.



Hadi has low vision. His vision problems resulted in him continuously dialing wrong numbers when he tried to use the phone. Through TAP for Telephone, Hadi received an adapted phone with large high contrast buttons and a talk-back feature that tells him what number he has dialed. The equipment has resolved his problems using the phone.

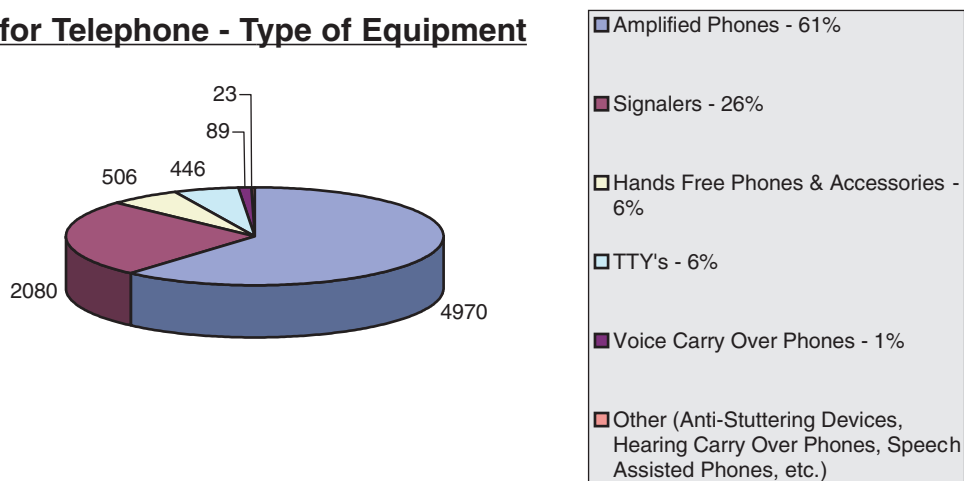
Equipment provided by TAP for Telephone can overcome years of inability to use the telephone. Forty percent of TAP for Telephone consumers indicate they were unable to use the telephone for more than 5 years before receiving adaptive equipment.

Years Consumers Unable to Use the Phone

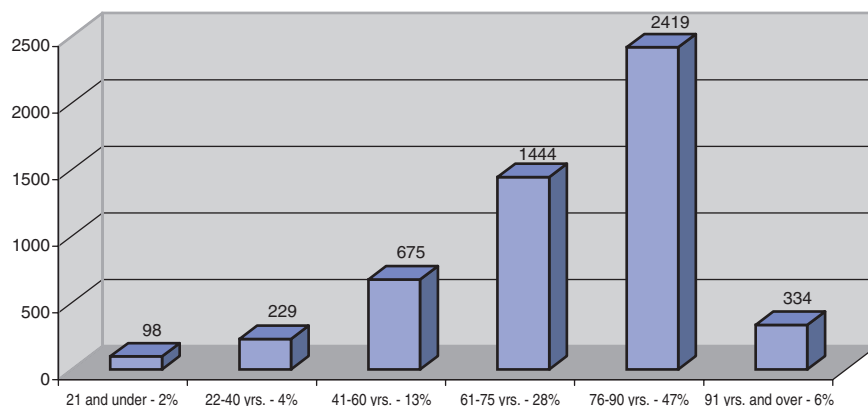


This year, 8,114 adaptive telephone devices were provided by TAP for Telephone, an increase of 34% from last year. A network of agencies across the state provides consumer support and receives ongoing training and demonstration equipment from MoAT. This network ensures correct equipment selection through trial use of demonstration devices.

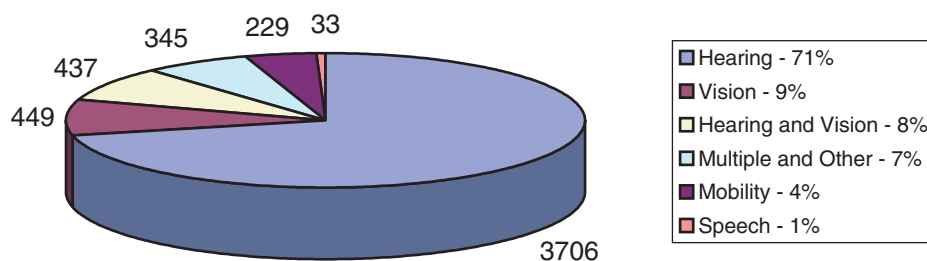
TAP for Telephone - Type of Equipment



TAP for Telephone - Age of Recipients

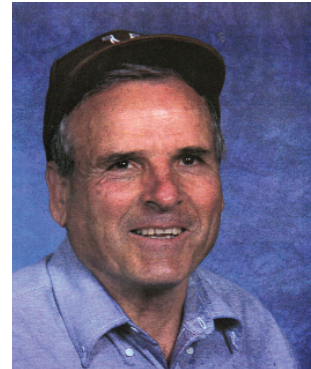


TAP for Telephone - Disability of Recipients



TAP for Internet

Homer is a former U.S. Marine who has an excellent memory and comprehension, but because of his dyslexia could not learn to read. For years Homer's wife would read the information he needed to him. Through TAP for Internet, Homer received the Kurzweil 3000, which is a software program that reads text on the computer monitor. It also has features that read words, sentences, or phrases aloud and a dictionary. With this adaptive equipment, Homer can now independently use the computer even when the task requires the reading of information. He can now update family members through e-mail about his visits to his mother who recently had a stroke. He says that the adaptive equipment "opens up the world" and he is excited about the opportunities that have become available to him because of the adaptive equipment and support provided through TAP for Internet.

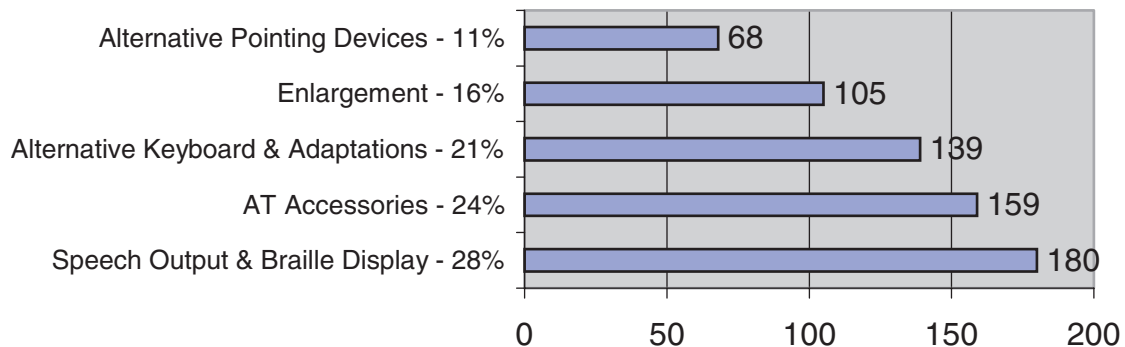


William is a four-year old boy from Kansas City. He has multiple disabilities that keep him from being able to use a regular computer keyboard or mouse. His parents were concerned that William was not able to develop computer skills that other young children are able to learn that they will use for a lifetime. Through TAP for Internet, his parents obtained an adaptive keyboard, pointing device, and adaptive software that reads out loud the print on a website. While he still needs some help from his parents in accessing educational web sites, William can use his adaptive equipment to navigate the sites independently. William's father commented that TAP for Internet is the best program not only for the equipment provided but also for consumer support people who assist families in deciding what adaptive equipment will work for their family member.

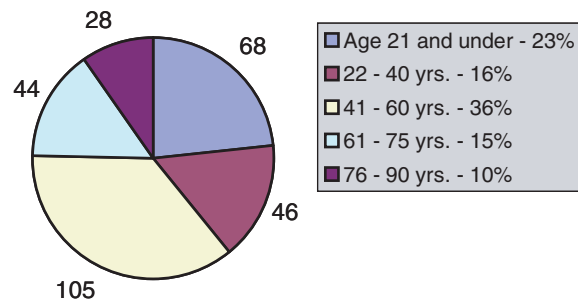
Missouri is the first and only state in the nation whose telecommunication equipment distribution program includes adaptive devices needed for internet access. Missouri was recognized this year by the American Foundation for the Blind for development of this ground-breaking program.

TAP for Internet provided 687 adaptive computer devices this year to eligible Missourians. To support equipment selection, installation and training on use, a network of consumer support providers has been developed across the state. Given the complexity of some adaptive computer equipment, the investment in consumer support has proven absolutely critical for this program to be cost-effective.

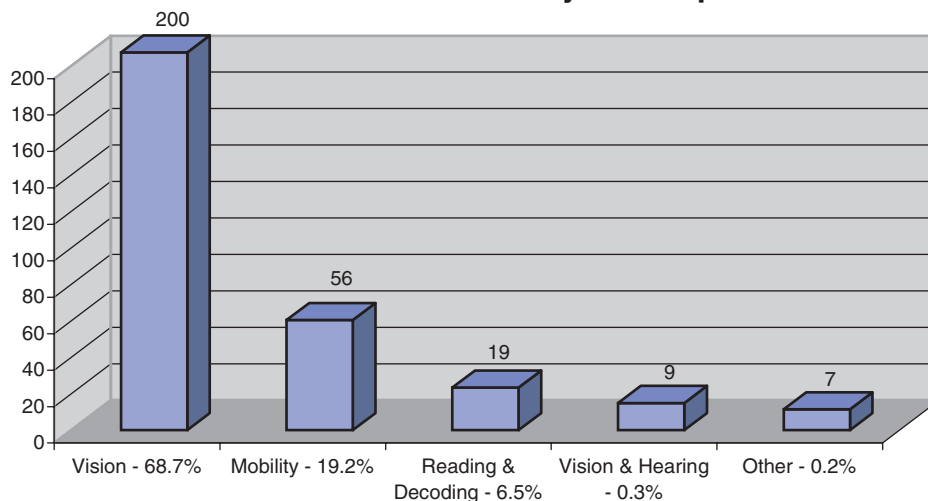
TAP for Internet - Type of Equipment



TAP for Internet - Age of Recipients

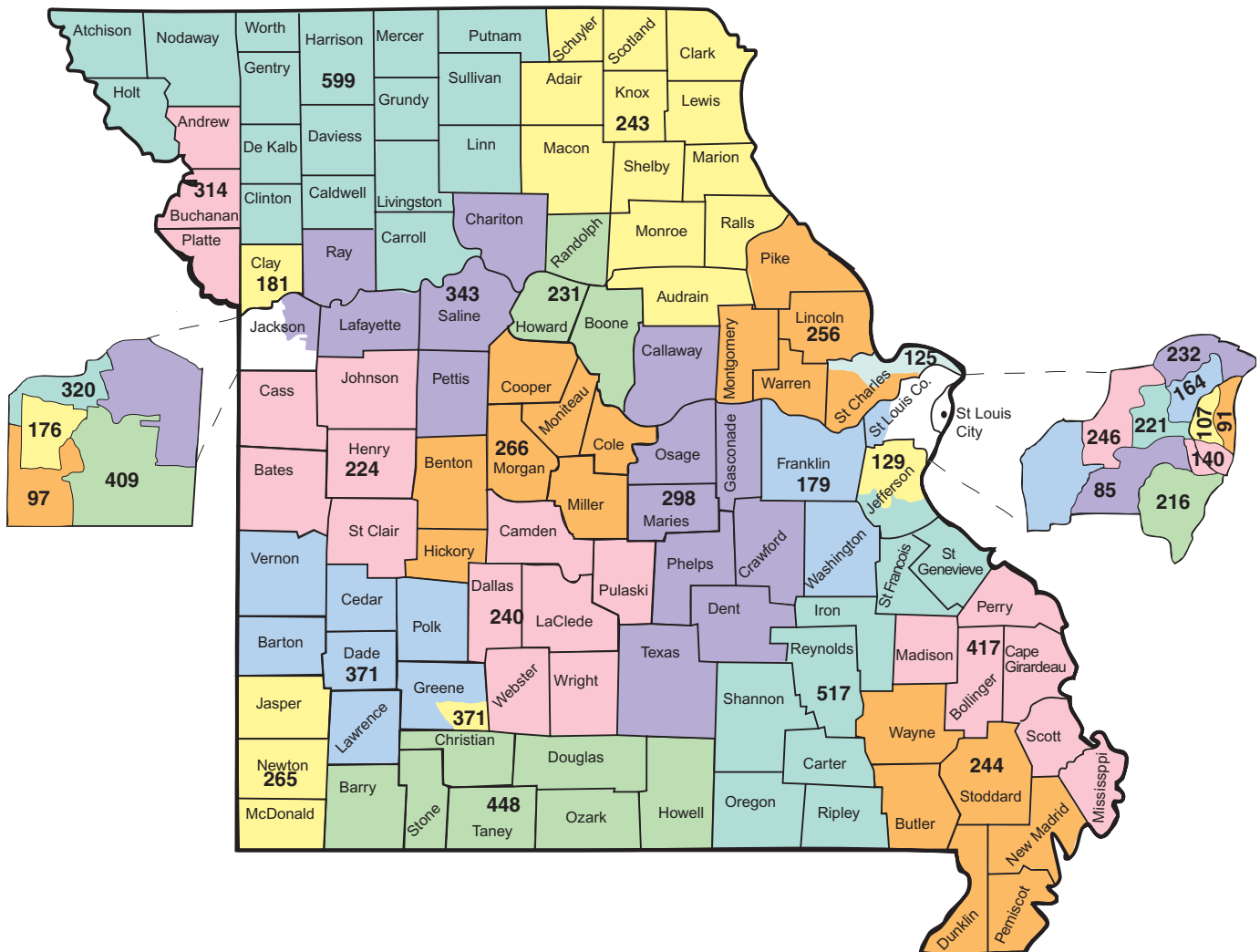


TAP for Internet - Disability of Recipients



Consumer satisfaction rating for both TAP for Telephone and TAP for Internet is well above 90%. Over half (56%) of TAP for Telephone consumers report using adaptive telephone equipment to call for emergency services and half indicate having the adaptive equipment allows them to live independently and make critical calls for transportation and medical services. Among consumers who received adaptive computer equipment through TAP for Internet, 64% are using the internet and e-mail to make contacts with business and 53% are accessing government services online.

TAP Equipment Distributed by Senatorial District



Missouri Disability Legislative Listserv

“A democratic society rests in the ability of its elected officials to know the minds of their constituents . . .”

The legislative process is fast-paced, and constituents need to be informed in a timely manner. The Missouri Disability Legislative Listserv meets this need. As the 2002 legislative session progressed, Missourians with disabilities and other disability advocates were able to stay up-to-date on legislation related to assistive technology and other disability issues through the MoAT legislative listserv. Over 290 individuals and organizations subscribed to the listserv and forwarded legislative postings to over a thousand other Missourians with disabilities.

“Thank you so much for the update! I have been finding it extremely challenging to keep on top of the budget items.”

— government affairs director of a national disability organization

“Just a word of encouragement and praise: you did a great job of keeping us informed on legislative issues this year and I really appreciated it!”

— director of a center for independent living

Assistive Technology Leadership Program

MoAT encourages the development of AT expertise and best practices in Missouri through the AT Leadership Program. The leadership program provides funding support for professional development experiences in AT.

Approved individuals participated in various training and shared the information with fellow Missourians. Trainings included conferences such as Technology & Persons with Disabilities, Closing the Gap, and Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference & Expo.

Individuals Approved in 2001/2002

- ★ Jennifer Beutel – North Kansas City School District
- ★ Russell Ewell – Paraquad, Inc.
- ★ Lois Jones – Reeds Spring R-IV schools
- ★ Mary Secora – Show Me Tech
- ★ Cheryl Snorgrass – The Capper Foundation
- ★ Charlie Taylor – Houston R-1 School District
- ★ Cari Wright & Jen Reese – SW Center for Independent Living

***Missouri Assistive Technology
touched the lives of over 28,000 Missourians
with disabilities this year -- and over 10,000 children,
adults and older persons obtained assistive technology
needed for independence through
MoAT services & programs.***



***Missouri Assistive Technology Advisory Council
4731 S. Cochise, Suite 114
Independence, MO 64055-6975***

***816/373-5193 Voice
816/373-9315 TTY
816/373-9314 Fax
E-mail: matpmo@swbell.net***

Web Site: <http://www.dolir.state.mo.us/matp/>